

Portland police close Commercial Street from Pearl to Franklin to traffic just after 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 13, 2022.

Associated Press

Amid threats, security rises at meetings of public officials

By SCOTT BAUER
Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—The meeting place? A secret. Agenda? Not public. Name tags? Take them off in public. Even one of the main social events — trivia night — would be at an undisclosed location. This was no meeting of spies or undercover law enforcement agents. Instead, these were the security protocols for a gathering this week in Madison, Wisconsin, of state election bureaucrats from around the U.S. While the hush-hush measures might seem a bit extreme, they were put in place because of the very real threats against election workers that have been escalating since the 2020 presidential election as former President Donald Trump continues to promote the lie that widespread fraud cost him re-election. Security increased at

meetings of government officials after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, "but not like this where the agenda is kept secret," said Kevin Kennedy, who was Wisconsin's top election official for nearly four decades before retiring in 2016. He has attended meetings of the National Association of State Election Directors for more than 30 years and said it was jarring that otherwise anonymous election workers are now being targeted. "This is just at a different level, and it's a reflection of the times and it's unfortunate," he said. State and local election officials have become targets for those upset with Trump's loss and who believe any number of unfounded conspiracy theories about a rigged election. Many have retired or quit as a result, raising staffing concerns in some offices.

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Recovery of 101% in 2nd quarter of 2022 versus 2nd quarter 2019



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Bridge on Green Corridor closed for maintenance work



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Amid threats, security rises at meetings of public officials

Continued from Front

Four people have been charged by federal prosecutors, with one of them pleading guilty last month. In that case, Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold was the subject of multiple threatening posts on social media.

Robert Heberle, deputy chief of the Justice Department's public integrity section, told state election officials recently that dozens of cases were still under investigation and more prosecutions were expected. Griswold, a Democrat who has received numerous death threats since the 2020 election, traveled to the National Association of Secretaries of State conference earlier this summer in Louisiana with private security. In a statement to The Associated Press, Griswold said she won't be intimidated by the threats and said a new state law she helped pass increases protections for election workers at all levels.

"We cannot allow violent threats to secretaries of state and election workers become an accepted norm in the United States," she said.

Organizers of the secretaries of state meeting, held twice a year, have been increasing security measures since the 2020 elec-

tion, said Maria Benson, the group's communications director. That includes coordinating with law enforcement agencies before and during the conferences, she said.

At the group's summer meeting earlier this month in Baton Rouge, local law enforcement officers were visible in the lobby and meeting areas of the hotel where the conference was being held. Members of the media were instructed to keep their credentials visible while in the meeting area. It's not just election officials who are commanding tighter security during their gatherings.

When the National Governors Association met earlier this month in Portland, Maine, security was the highest in the state in decades.

The heavy law enforcement presence included city police, state police and security details, including troopers from other states. Plainclothes police roamed the event, and extra officers were kept out of sight, in case they were needed. The increased security presence took place as demonstrators gathered to protest new abortion restrictions in states such as Arkansas, home of outgoing association chairman and current Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a Republican.



A sign critical Arkansas governor Asa Hutchinson is attached to a telephone pole outside of The Porthole and Boone's where an event for the National Governor's Association was taking place on Wednesday, July 13, 2022.

Associated Press

Security planning, which was in the works for months, also involved police K-9 units and patrol boats in the harbor. "We are in different times right now," said Shannon Moss, spokeswoman for the Maine Department of Public Safety. "Just look at recent events that happened in our country — mass shootings, violent and disruptive protests, a divisive political climate. Law enforcement has to be prepared to deal with these kinds of potential security threats."

There were no protesters outside the gathering of election administrators this week in Wisconsin, but the threats of violence against election workers have become so pervasive that

the group was taking no chances on security.

The exact location meeting — which ended up being just a block away from the state Capitol — wasn't revealed to reporters who registered to cover it until four days before the event began. There were no signs in the hotel announcing the meeting. And the agenda detailing topics to be discussed, such as "understanding and preventing insider threats," wasn't handed out until the start of the meeting.

Amy Cohen, executive director of the state elections group, cautioned the 170 registered attendees from 33 states to wear their name tags when at the event, but to take them off when they left and went

into the city.

"Don't advertise who you are and exactly why you're here," she said.

Cohen said meeting organizers coordinated with federal, state and local law enforcement for the event. She encouraged attendees to report any suspicious activity they saw, and hotel staff had been trained to be vigilant.

She said the association did not live-stream any of the panels nor did it post any messages to its Twitter account during the gathering, although there were no social media prohibitions for those who attended.

"Please do be thoughtful about what you post and remember that some of the people in this room are dealing with serious security concerns and we need to be respectful to keep everyone safe," Cohen said at the start of the gathering.

Judd Choate, Colorado's state elections director for the past 13 years, attended the Wisconsin event and said he has been surprised at the level of rancor and hostility toward election workers. He said many of the attacks are coming from people with little understanding of how elections are run.

"We were kind of a sleepy part of government, and we're not anymore," he said. □

Turning up heat, U.S. targets Nicaraguan sugar imports



A woman sells sugar cane at the Oriental Market in Managua, Nicaragua, Dec 7, 2012. A woman sells sugar cane at the Oriental Market in Managua, Nicaragua, Dec 7, 2012.

Associated Press

By PAUL WISEMAN and GA-BRIELA SELSER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration dropped Nicaragua from

a list of countries that can ship sugar to the United States at low import tax rates as the U.S. intensifies economic pressure on the authoritarian government of president Daniel Ortega. The U.S. hands out sugar import quotas annually by country and imposes relatively modest levies on shipments that come in below the cutoff.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative put out a list late Wednesday allocating quotas to 39 countries from Argentina to Zimbabwe for just over 1.1 million metric tons for raw sugar cane. The quotas cover the budget year 2023, which starts

Oct. 1. Nicaragua, which got a quota of more than 22,000 metric tons in budget year 2022, was excluded from the 2023 list.

Nicaragua last year exported \$83.5 million worth of sugar to the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The administration has been considering ways to turn up the heat on the Nicaraguan government, which last year held what the U.S. considered daily show trials against antigovernment activists ahead of the fall elections. His likely opponents locked out of the contest, Ortega easily won a fourth straight term.

The U.S. also accuses the Ortega government of corruption and sees the country's close relationship with Russia as a regional security threat.

Mario Amador, president of Nicaragua's National Sugar Producers' Commission, said he was caught off guard by the decision and called it unfortunate. He said that neither the Nicaraguan nor U.S. governments had given him advance notice. Amador said he would try to speak with officials at the U.S. embassy in Managua and the Nicaraguan industry and trade ministry upon his return from a business trip to Mexico. □

Governors' immigrant-busing strategy hits home for mayors

By CLAUDIA TORRENS and MORGAN LEE

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two Republican border-state governors who are investing billions of dollars in immigration enforcement and spending hours at the podium blasting Biden administration policies have found indirect support for their arguments from two unlikely sources: Democratic Mayors Muriel Bowser, of Washington, and Eric Adams, of New York.

The mayors' recent overtures for federal aid came in response to Texas and Arizona busing migrants away from the border, a months-old practice that has been long on political theater but short on practical impact.

While city leaders strongly criticize Govs. Greg Abbott, of Texas, and Doug Ducey, of Arizona, their requests for money have bolstered the governors' narratives about immigration putting unusual strains on American communities, even though Adams said — incorrectly — Tuesday that the two states are paying migrants to go to New York. Washington Mayor Bowser says asylum-seekers are being "tricked" with free bus rides that don't get close enough to their final



A group of Brazilian migrants make their way around a gap in the U.S.-Mexico border in Yuma, Ariz., seeking asylum in the U.S. after crossing over from Mexico, June 8, 2021.

Associated Press

destinations, leaving many at Union Station, near the U.S. Capitol and the White House.

"This is a very significant issue," Bowser said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation." Under pressure to provide financial support, Bowser says she wants the federal government to help. The City Council told the mayor last week that volunteer groups are "burned out and overwhelmed."

"Now that the border has come to D.C., it is our re-

sponsibility to meet the moment," the council members wrote, while also castigating Abbott and Ducey for showing "no regard for people who are exercising their human right to seek asylum."

Republicans who have sharply critical of the White House have barely contained their glee.

"Looks like Mayor Bowser is starting to feel a glimpse of what it's like to be a border community under the #BidenBorderCrisis,"

Republicans on the House Homeland Security Committee wrote. "Doesn't feel great, does it?"

Ducey seized on Adams' incorrect statement that Arizona was busing migrants to New York, noting it was sending them only to Washington.

"Mayor Adams needs to get his facts straight and pay closer attention to what's really occurring because our nation's security depends on it," he wrote on Twitter.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Tuesday that the administration was looking into the mayors' concerns. She said it was "shameful that some governors are using migrants as a political tool, as a political play."

The state of Texas has voluntarily bused more than 6,000 migrants to Washington since mid-April as Abbott casts himself as a counterweight to Biden on immigration, insisting that "every American community is a border community."

Abbott's busing is just one element of an increasingly aggressive expansion of his immigration enforcement powers into the traditional domain of U.S. government. Abbott authorized state forces this month to apprehend migrants and return them to the U.S.-Mexico border, where Texas has spent more than \$3 billion in state funds on a massive security apparatus, without stemming the flow of migrants.

Arizona says it has bused 1,151 migrants to Washington since May. About one of every four named New York as their destination, about one in five says New Jersey, and many of the rest were headed to Georgia or stay in Washington. □

CVS seeks verification on drugs with possible abortion use

By TOM MURPHY
AP Health Writer

CVS Health is asking pharmacists in some states to verify that a few of the prescriptions they provide will not be used end a pregnancy.

A spokesman said Thursday that the drugstore chain recently started doing this for methotrexate and misoprostol, two drugs used in medication abortions but also to treat other conditions.

Spokesman Mike DeAngelis said the policy started the first week in July in Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Oklahoma, and Texas. The drugstore chain's re-

quest comes after the U.S. Supreme Court last month overturned Roe v. Wade, the 1973 decision that had provided a constitutional right to abortion. The ruling is expected to lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states.

DeAngelis said state laws that restrict the dispensing of medications used for abortions have forced the company to start the validations. He noted that some of the laws come with criminal penalties. The drugstore chain, which is based in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, is asking care providers to help by includ-

ing their diagnosis on the prescriptions.

DeAngelis said CVS Health will still fill prescriptions for miscarriages or ectopic pregnancies, which grow outside the womb and are not viable.

"We will continue to focus on delivering care to our patients while complying with state laws and federal guidance that continues to evolve," DeAngelis said in an email.

The Supreme Court decision has put pharmacies in the middle of an intense national debate. Earlier this month, the Biden administration warned pharmacies



A CVS Health product is displayed at a store in North Andover, Mass., Monday, May 3, 2021.

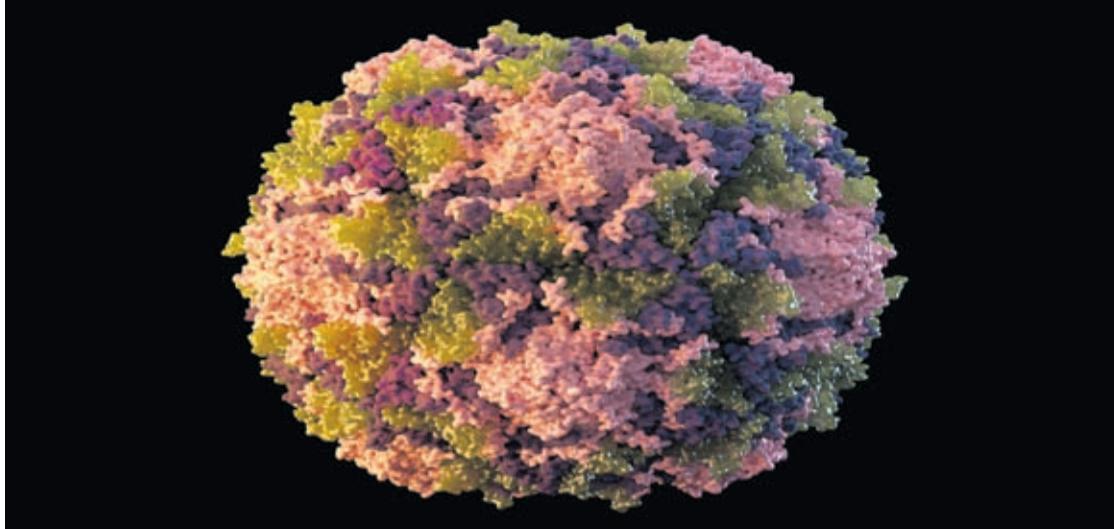
Associated Press

not to discriminate against women over the prescriptions they seek.

The administration noted that examples of discrimination could include a pharmacy that refuses to fill a prescription of misopros-

tol prescribed to help deal with a severe stomach ulcer.

Methotrexate also is used to treat several types of cancers as well as rheumatoid arthritis, according to the Mayo Clinic. □



This 2014 illustration made available by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention depicts a polio virus particle.

Associated Press

New York reports 1st US polio case in nearly a decade

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — An unvaccinated young adult from New York recently contracted polio, the first U.S. case in nearly a decade, health officials said Thursday.

Officials said the patient, who lives in Rockland County, had developed paralysis. The person developed symptoms a month ago and did not recently travel outside the country, county health officials said. It appears the patient had a vaccine-derived strain of the virus, perhaps from someone who got live vaccine — available in other countries, but not the U.S. — and spread it, officials said.

The person is no longer deemed contagious, but investigators are trying to figure out how the infection occurred and whether other people were exposed to the virus.

Most Americans are vaccinated against polio, but this should serve as a wake-up call to the unvaccinated, said Jennifer Nuzzo, a Brown University pandemic researcher.

"This isn't normal. We don't want to see this," Nuzzo said. "If you're vaccinated, it's not something you need to worry about. But if you haven't gotten your kids vaccinated, it's really important that you make sure they're up to date."

Health officials scheduled vaccination clinics in New York for Friday and Mon-

day, and encouraged anyone who has not been vaccinated to get the shots.

"We want shots in the arms of those who need it," Rockland County Health Commissioner Dr. Patricia Schnabel Ruppert said at a Thursday news conference. Polio was once one of the nation's most feared diseases, with annual outbreaks causing thousands of cases of paralysis. The disease mostly affects children.

Vaccines became available starting in 1955, and a national vaccination campaign cut the annual number of U.S. cases to less than 100 in the 1960s and fewer than 10 in the 1970s, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 1979, polio was declared eliminated in the U.S., meaning there was no longer routine spread.

Rarely, travelers have brought polio infections into the U.S. The last such case was in 2013, when a 7-month-old who had recently moved to the U.S. from India was diagnosed in San Antonio, Texas, according to the federal health officials. That child also had the type of polio found in the live form of vaccine used in other countries.

There are two types of polio vaccines. The U.S. and many other countries use shots made with an inactivated version of the virus. But some countries where polio has been more of a recent threat use a weak-

ened live virus that is given to children as drops in the mouth. In rare instances, the weakened virus can mutate into a form capable of sparking new outbreaks.

U.S. children are still routinely vaccinated against polio with the inactivated vaccine. Federal officials recommend four doses: to be given at 2 months of age; 4 months; at 6 to 18 months; and at age 4 through 6 years. Some states require only three doses.

According to the CDC's most recent childhood vaccination data, about 93% of 2-year-olds had received at least three doses of polio vaccine.

Polio spreads mostly from person to person or through contaminated water. It can infect a person's spinal cord, causing paralysis and possibly permanent disability and death.

Polio is endemic in Afghanistan and Pakistan, although numerous countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia have also reported cases in recent years. Rockland County, in New York City's northern suburbs, has been a center of vaccine resistance in recent years. A 2018-2019 measles outbreak there infected 312 people.

Last month, health officials in Britain warned parents to make sure children have been vaccinated because the polio virus had been found in London sewage samples. No cases of paralysis were reported. □

FBI: No sign of Jimmy Hoffa under New Jersey bridge



Teamsters Union president Jimmy Hoffa is seen in Washington on July 26, 1959.

Associated Press

By ED WHITE

Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — The FBI found no evidence of missing Teamsters boss Jimmy Hoffa during a search of land under a New Jersey bridge, a spokeswoman said Thursday.

The Pulaski Skyway now becomes another dead end in the decades long mystery that has stretched from a Michigan horse farm to the East Coast: Where are the remains of one of America's most powerful labor leaders?

The 47-year riddle turned last year to land next to a former landfill under the bridge in Jersey City. The FBI conducted a search there in early June.

"Nothing of evidentiary value was discovered during that search," said Mara Schneider, an FBI spokeswoman in Detroit.

"While we do not currently anticipate any additional activity at the site, the FBI will continue to pursue any viable lead in our efforts to locate Mr. Hoffa," she said. Schneider declined to comment further when asked for details about the excavation.

Authorities believe Hoffa disappeared in suburban Detroit in 1975 while meeting with reputed mobsters. Dan Moldea, a journalist who has written extensively about the Hoffa saga, said he was personally briefed by the FBI in a video conference call Thursday.

He said the FBI and its contractors did not dig in the

exact spot that he had recommended.

"I'm not thrilled with the result. ... My impression today was them breaking the bad news to me: Thanks for the tip but this is over. That's my interpretation," Moldea told The Associated Press.

"They dug holes very, very deep," he said.

The FBI reached out to Moldea last year after he published a detailed account from Frank Cappola, who was a teenager in the 1970s when he worked at the old PJP Landfill near the bridge. Cappola said his father, Paul Cappola, who also worked at the landfill, explained how Hoffa's body was delivered there in 1975, placed in a steel drum and buried with other barrels, bricks and dirt.

Paul Cappola, worried that police might be watching, dug a hole on New Jersey state property, about 100 yards from the landfill, and subsequently moved the unmarked barrel there, according to Moldea.

Hoffa was president of the 2.1 million-member Teamsters union from 1957-71, even keeping the title while in prison for trying to bribe jurors during a previous trial. He was released from prison in 1971 when President Richard Nixon shortened his sentence. It has been long speculated that Hoffa, who was 62, was killed by enemies because he was planning a Teamsters comeback. He was declared legally dead in 1982. □

U.S. publishes list of alleged bad actors in Central America

BY SONIA PÉREZ D.

Associated Press

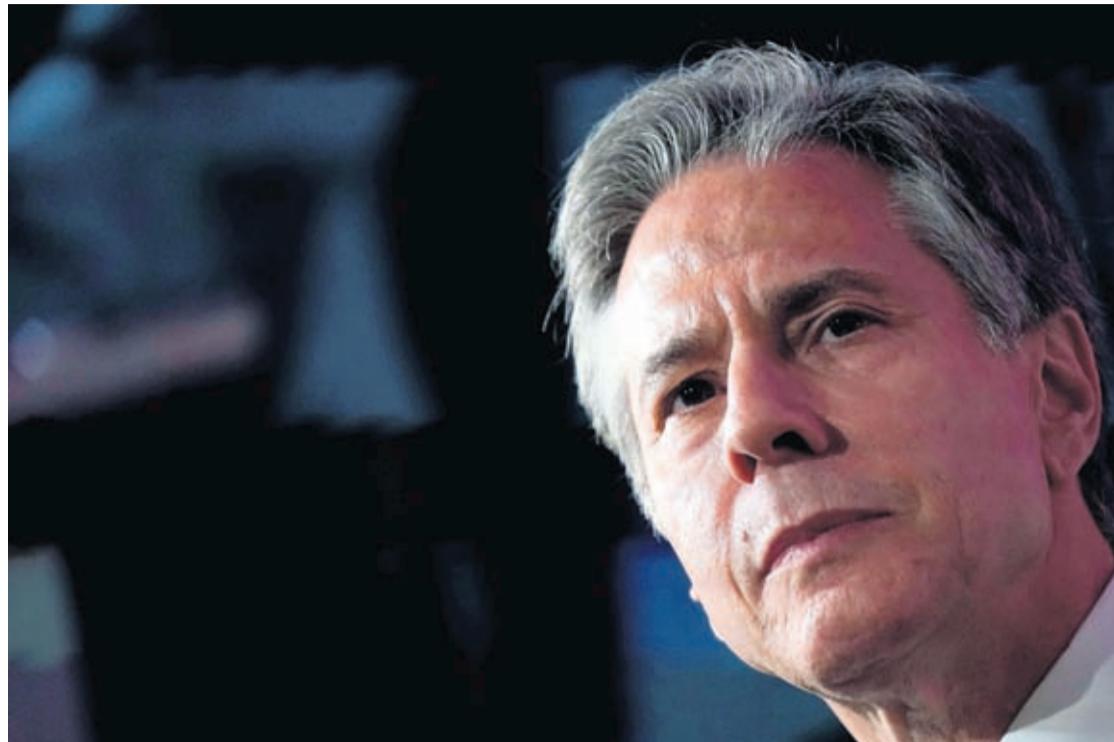
GUATEMALA CITY (AP) —

The U.S. State Department has named 60 current and former officials, as well as some corporate figures, in its latest list of people suspected of corruption or undermining democracy in four Central American countries.

This year's list especially focused on politicians, judges and others suspected of working to stack courts in Guatemala and the judges and prosecutors involved in cases against opposition political figures in Nicaragua in the runup to that country's presidential election last year.

The list was provided to the U.S. Congress in compliance with legislation pushed two years ago by then-U.S. Rep. Eliot Engel. Those listed generally become ineligible for admission to the United States and have their visas revoked.

"The United States is committed to partnering with the people of Central America to strengthen democracy, improve rule of law, and combat cor-



Secretary of State Antony Blinken attends a panel discussion during the Summit of the Americas, in Los Angeles, June 7, 2022.

Associated Press

ruption," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement Wednesday. "These individuals, through their significant corruption, efforts to obstruct investigations into corruption, and undermining of democratic processes and institutions, weaken the ability of governments in the region to respond to the needs of their citizens, contributing

to irregular migration and destabilizing societies." The new list also named former officials in previous administrations in Honduras, such as Juan Carlos "El Tigre" Bonilla Valladares, the ex-director of the National Police who was extradited to the United States in May to face drug trafficking charges.

Former and current offi-

cials in El Salvador made the list, including President Nayib Bukele's press secretary and the president's legal adviser, who allegedly masterminded the removal of five Supreme Court magistrates and the attorney general.

While required by Congress, the annual listing of corrupt actors or those threatening democracy align with

Biden administration policies giving more weight to those issues.

That shift from the Trump administration, which focused relations with those countries more narrowly on controlling immigration has led to more tense relationships in the region.

Guatemala President Alejandro Giammattei has been dismissive of U.S. officials' criticism of his attorney general and what they see as a backsliding in Guatemala on battling corruption.

The list includes the country's new special prosecutor against impunity who is accused of obstructing corruption investigations.

A number of the Guatemalans, including two Supreme Court magistrates, were allegedly involved in a scheme to stack the Supreme and Appellate Courts with corrupt judges, according to the State Department report.

The Biden administration has also clashed with El Salvador's Bukele, expressing concerns that his tightening grip on power is weakening the country's democracy. □

Report: U.K. clearly overwhelmed by surge in migrant crossings

By SYLVIA HUI

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's response to growing numbers of migrants crossing the English Channel on small boats is poor and officials are clearly overwhelmed on some days, an independent inspection found in a report published Thursday. The review by David Neal, the chief inspector of borders and immigration, was among critical reports published this week on the British government's handling of migration and asylum-seekers.

Authorities have been struggling to cope with an increasing flow of people fleeing countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq to seek asylum and better opportunities in the U.K. Since the start of the year, around 15,100 people

have reached British shores after crossing the English Channel one of the world's busiest shipping lanes from France in unseaworthy vessels like rubber dinghies. The figure is almost double the 7,735 recorded last summer.

On April 13, 651 people made the crossing in 18 boats the highest daily total so far this year.

"The volume is unprecedented, and on some days the system is clearly overwhelmed," Neal said.

"Systems, processes and resourcing pathways, which months into the crisis should be routine, codified, auditable and familiar, have been delivered at 'best effort.'

This is not good enough," he added.

Neal described the department's data as "inexcus-

ably awful" and said its security check equipment was "often first generation and unreliable."

More than 200 migrants absconded from secure hotels after arriving in Britain in just four months, his report found, and some didn't have their biometrics recorded.

The inspector said his report was submitted to Home Secretary Priti Patel in February and should have been published in April. He said he was "frustrated" by the way the Home Office sat on his findings for months.

The Home Office said it has accepted all of Neal's recommendations and it has already changed the way it managed migrants arriving in small boats.

A separate independent report, also published Thurs-

day, said U.K. border officials have been "ineffective" and "possibly counter-productive" in preventing migrants from making small boat journeys to British shores.



People thought to be migrants who undertook the crossing from France in small boats and were picked up in the Channel, arrive to be disembarked from a small transfer boat which ferried them from a larger British border force vessel that didn't come into the port, in Dover, south east England, Friday, June 17, 2022.

Associated Press

Ukrainian experts turn to Israel for mental trauma training

By EMILY ROSE
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Ukrainian therapist Svitlana Kutsenko thought she was making progress with her patients army veterans recovering from mental trauma suffered during fighting with Russia in 2014. Then, war erupted again.

Now, five months after Russia invaded Ukraine, Kutsenko says the situation looks bleaker than ever. Many of her patients have returned to the front lines, while ordinary citizens scarred by the horrors of life in wartime are now seeking treatment.

"Sometimes it's bearable, sometimes it's not," Kutsenko, who lives in Kyiv, told The Associated Press. "Some people are suffering from huge fear fear of death, fear of their relatives' death and some are pretty angry about what's going on and they want to somehow take this anger under control."

Kutsenko was among 20 Ukrainian mental health professionals who spent the past two weeks in Israel receiving training on how to



Ukrainian mental health professionals learn how to treat trauma victims in a special three-week course run by the Israeli Metiv organization in Herzog Medical Center in Jerusalem, Wednesday, July 20, 2022.

treat trauma cases.

Israel, which has gone through numerous wars with its Arab neighbors and has a large population of Holocaust survivors, has deep experience in treating psychological or mental trauma.

But in Ukraine, awareness for recognizing and treating mental trauma remains

relatively low. And despite a conflict with Russia that has been ongoing since 2014, the country is not equipped to deal with the massive numbers of people affected by the Russian invasion.

Kutsenko said that there is a great difference between treating patients struggling to come to terms with

events from the past and helping people who are under fire cope with grief and fear in real time.

"Right now, in Ukraine, it's not just, you know, shooting and people" being killed by missiles and bombs, says Kutsenko, adding that torture, rape and other terrible acts are also happening.

The course's instructor,

Associated Press

Danny Brom, says treating mental trauma in Israel has taught him how to provide therapy to victims who are both post-traumatic and still remain in immediate danger.

These lessons, he says, have helped him relate to mental health professionals from conflict zones across the world and especially Ukraine.

"They understand that we Israelis know what we are talking about. This ... has happened to us in the different wars, so there's a very special connection between them and us. They really feel that we understand what we are talking about," said Brom, a clinical psychologist who is director of Metiv, an Israeli nonprofit that trains mental health professionals to treat trauma victims.

The group included 20 psychologists from across Ukraine, including some who have been displaced throughout the war. The course included training in cognitive behavior therapy techniques, or CBT, which are commonly used to treat depression and anxiety. □

Israel aims to stop Russian move against Jewish nonprofit

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's prime minister on Thursday said he would send a delegation to Moscow in hopes of halting a Russian order to shutter the operations of a major nonprofit organization that promotes Jewish immigration to Israel.

Yair Lapid's decision came after a spokeswoman for a Moscow District Court was quoted as saying that Russia's Justice Ministry aims to "shut down" the Russian branch of the Jewish Agency. A court hearing in the case is scheduled for July 28.

The Jewish Agency is a nonprofit that works closely with the Israeli government to bring Jewish immigrants from around the world to Israel. Under the country's law of return, anyone with at least one Jewish grandparent is automatically eli-

gible for Israeli citizenship. The Jewish Agency has been active in Russia since 1989, according to the Interfax report. Well over 1 million immigrants have come to Israel from the former Soviet Union, and an estimated 150,000 Jews still live in Russia.

According to the agency, immigration has picked up since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, with 17,000 Russians taking Israeli citizenship and as many as 40,000 others coming to Israel and expected to apply. In comparison, some 7,700 Russian Jews immigrated to Israel last year. Lapid's office said the delegation heading to Russia would include representatives from his office, the Foreign Ministry and other government ministries.

"The Jewish community in

Russia is deeply connected with Israel. Its importance arises in every diplomatic discussion with the Russian leadership," Lapid said. "We will continue to act through diplomatic channels so that the Jewish Agency's important activity will not cease."

A Jewish Agency official said that Russia has accused the nonprofit of violating its privacy laws by collecting personal information of people who are interested in immigrating to Israel. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the pending court case, said it was not clear why Russia was cracking down on what he described as routine paperwork.

Russia and Israel have a close, if sometimes uneasy, relationship in Syria. Their



Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid speaks during a cabinet meeting at the prime minister's office in Jerusalem, Sunday, July 17, 2022.
Associated Press

two air forces maintain close communications to prevent clashes in Syrian skies despite being on different sides of the civil war there.

Russia has provided support to Syrian President Bashar Assad, while Israel often strikes what it says are

enemy Iranian and Hezbollah targets aligned with Assad.

Lapid, who became Israel's interim prime minister this month after spending the past year as foreign minister, has been an outspoken critic of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. □

Bridge on Green Corridor closed for maintenance work

During a press conference Wednesday morning, the Department of Public Works (DOW) announced that from next Monday, July 25th, the road on the bridge of Green Corridor will be closed for maintenance. Director of DOW, Mr. Marlonn Maduro, together with representatives of Aribus and Caribbean Infrastructure Company (CIC) gave information regarding the upcoming work.

Croes says that the maintenance work is relatively large, and according to a contract, the maintenance work is responsibility of the contractor for the duration of the valid contract. Maintenance of the bridge is something routine that needs to take place, and this is the first time that such an extensive work will be carried out.

To carry out this work, Croes mentioned that there are various challenges that must be confronted. He explains that he sat together with all stakeholders – which is DTI (Technical Inspection Department), KPA (Police Force) and Ambulance, because in order for the maintenance work to take place, they need to close the entire bridge. The solution that was chosen will mitigate the risk for the workers, and will mitigate the risk for traffic which passes on the bridge. For the Government of Aruba and DOW, the goal was to have this big work of maintenance take place during the big summer vacation, seeing as the entire road must be closed, in order to

avoid disrupting traffic severely.

The maintenance work will begin next Monday, July 25th, from 9am to 7pm and during this time the road will be closed, from the roundabout in Kibaima, the roundabout at the Drive-In, to the roundabout at Pos Chikito. The work will be done on the top of the bridge, which will consist of sandblast, removal of rust, and painting of the bridge.

"These are preventative measures to avoid deterioration", Croes indicated.

Regarding the redirection of traffic, he explains that the old bridge will be used, known as the TeleAruba bridge. Also traffic from San Nicolas to Santa Cruz and vice versa can make use of Mondi Fierno, Franse Pas.

From 7pm to 9am the bridge will be partially open. The heavy equipment will remain on the bridge, and the two outer lanes on the bridge will be accessible for traffic to pass normally during these hours.

Croes indicated that the work will last for two weeks. He also said that maintenance work like this will be taking place every five years. He explains that the first phase is taking place this year and will focus on the top part of the bridge. Next year it will focus on the bottom, and every five years they will do this type of maintenance.

The director of DOW also mentioned that they reached an agreement with emergency services,



Police Force, Fire Department and Ambulance, that in case they need to use the bridge, there will be close communication with the contractor in order to give them access so they can use the bridge even as the maintenance is being done.

Sannin Daou, spokesperson for Aribus, informed the community and everyone who uses the services of Aribus, that the normal bus route will be redirected. At the roundabout in Pos Chikito, it will pass on the inside and go back out at the roundabout in Drive-In, and from there it will follow the usual route. These changes are specifically for the bus lines 1, 2 and 3, which travel between San Nicolas and Oranjestad.

He commented that when the bridge opens again, from 7pm onwards the busses will pass the normal route on the big bridge again. He emphasizes that everyone who uses the bus service must be aware of the change in the route

and where they need to take the bus.

Daou called on other automobilists, specially truck and bus drivers, to be more careful on the small bridge, seeing as it is more dangerous as it has limited visibility. "We understand that there will be people there to indicate who has preference. So from our side, we want to pay more attention to automobilist safety, truck drivers please be aware that there will be people standing there to indicate who has preference, in order to avoid accidents", he added.

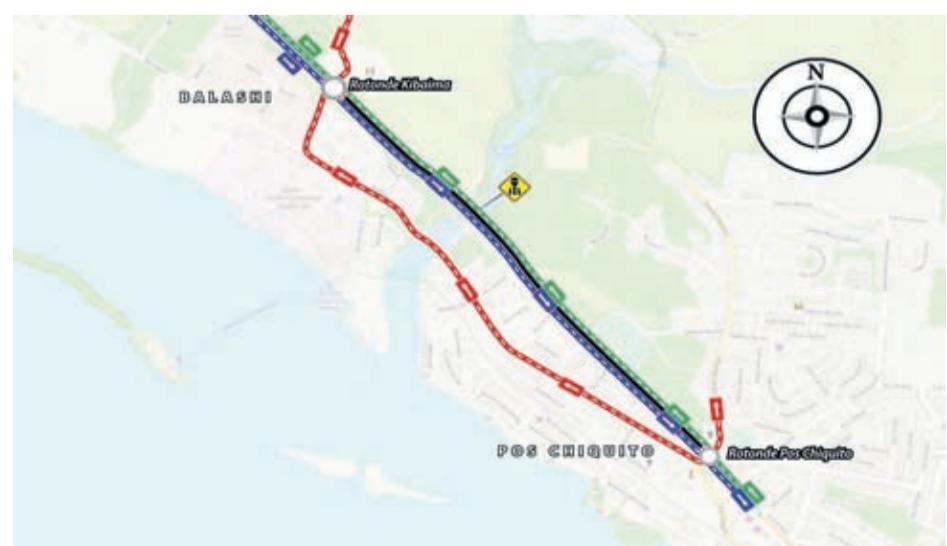
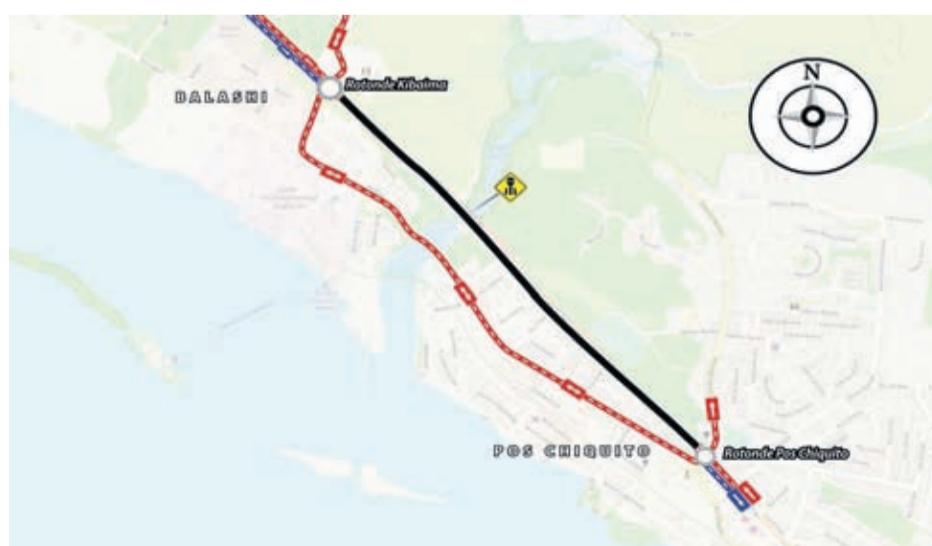
Lysander Wernet, project coordinator and representative of CIC, explains that from their side they will have their own workers available to help direct traffic in coordination with the Police Force. Already they reached some agreements to direct the traffic when necessary, particularly on the small bridge, the TeleAruba bridge.

Wernet indicated that the

initial idea was to close the bridge partially, but if this was done, the hours to work will also be more limited and the execution of the work will take around four weeks. Seeing as they will completely close the bridge because of security reasons, the contractor together with CIC came to an agreement to complete the work in two weeks.

He commented that the bridge is in good condition and the works are taking place simply because a bridge with a metal structure needs preventative maintenance regularly, and regarding the established plan, this has to be every five years.

Wernet asked the community for their understanding while the necessary works are being carried out. "We ask for the understanding of the community because these works are essential for the durability of the bridge. In a short time, two weeks, we will do everything that's possible to complete the work", he said. □





ORANJESTAD — 2021 was the official Grand Opening of Harbour House Aruba. The residence consisting of 94 units is located in the former Mar Azul building, right in the heart of Oranjestad. The two brothers Irwin J. Perret-Gentil and Alberto Perret-Gentil from PERING, one of the largest, privately-owned Real Estate and construction firms in Venezuela and Aruba, officially opened their new jewel in the presence of the invitees.

Harbour House Aruba is the ultimate smart investment or personal living space. A state-of-the-art lobby, an ocean-view gym, bar service, rooftop with 360 degrees view of Oranjestad, on-site parking, 24-hours security and a top floor lounge area with Jacuzzi's. Cherry on the cake: an infinity pool with a panorama on the harbour.

Harbour House Aruba offers cosmopolitan living in a beach-chic environment. The residence is fast-selling their studios, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units for many reasons but in a nutshell we can name: great location, great value for your money and great quality. To see exactly what still is available you may check the website which shows you a map with sold and open units. Updates on construction are also on beforehand. When you live abroad stopping by to check upon your purchase is not that simple, yet with the monthly up-

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dates on their website, it is a lot easier.

Hottest condo in town

Aruba Today talked to one of the owners from New York: "This is going to be the hottest condo

building on the island because this is the very first thing people see when they arrive here by cruise ship and it is the only one combining the ocean, port and city. We feel so happy to be the owner here, also, the organization is amazing. We are being accommodated in every way, the attention you get is extraordinary."

Boardwalk

Living here includes being part of Oranjestad and all its benefits. Around the Harbour House building a boardwalk is constructed allowing you to stroll along the waterfront and enjoy a drink on a terrace or dive into the art gallery, souvenir store or even have dinner facing the atmospheric harbour of Oranjestad.

The process of purchase is easy, whether you are abroad or on the island. Make an appointment through the website to visit the sales office when you are here. In that way you can actually see the unit, materials and amenities. If you are not on the island the website can help you out and the sales office is happy to send you all needed documentation for you to orientate. When agreed upon the unit you sign an agreement and move forward with the down payment which is \$ 50.000. At receipt of that amount the sales is closed and the price will not change. You know what you get and will not be surprised by price changes. The payment agreements after the deposit will be discussed and are flexible. Harbour House Aruba assist also in financing by banks.

For more information: <https://harbourhousearuba.com>.



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Recovery of 101% in 2nd quarter of 2022 versus 2nd quarter 2019



ORANJESTAD – Aruba Airport Authority N.V. (AAA) can report as follows on AUA Airport's performance for the 1st half of 2022.

Passenger flow numbers increased considerably in this 2nd quarter showing excellent recovery rates versus the same period in 2019. The total amount of revenue generating passengers (departing passengers) handled in the first half of 2022 was recorded at 577,143 which represents

a recovery of 89% versus that same period of 2019.

2nd Quarter 2022

A total recovery of 101% was reported for the 2nd quarter of 2022 versus that same quarter in 2019. In April 2022, AUA Airport handled 110,983 departing passengers. This was 6% more than March of 2022. In May 2022 AUA Airport handled 101,570 which was 8% less than the month before. In June the numbers increased considerably to

105,788 which was an increase of 4% versus May 2022. During these second quarter of 2022 245,889 passengers (pax) travelled to the US, 4,896 pax to Canada, 23,679 pax to Europe, 13,025 pax to the Netherlands Antilles, and 30,831 pax to Latin America.

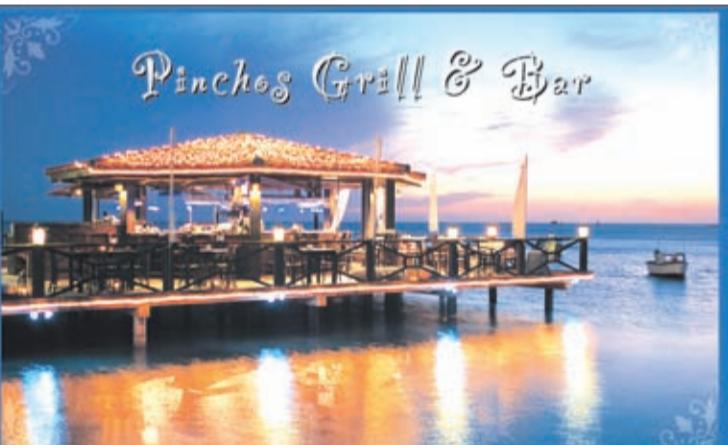
An average outbound passenger load factor (PLF) (number of seats of the total seats on board an aircraft that are occupied when departing from AUA

Airport) for the US Market of 90%, 89% and 90% were reported for respectively the months of April, May, and June. The average PLF for all markets was respectively 86%, 86% and 89% during that same period. In the second quarter of 2022 we surpassed the year average outbound PLF for all markets of 2019.

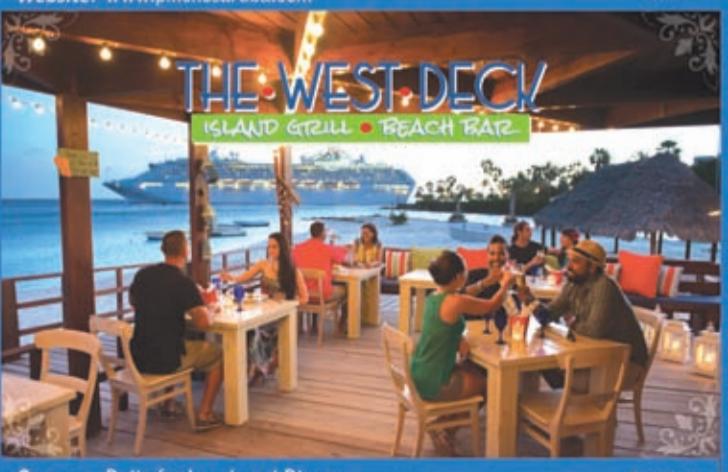
During the past 3 months, AUA Airport averaged 32 flights per day, which is 3 flights less than the average

of 35 daily flights during the same period in 2019.

During April, May, and June AUA Airport recovered respectively 101%, 104% and 99% of the amount of departing passengers that were handled in those same months in 2019. The recovery in total for the second quarter of 2022 amounted to 101% versus 2019, which is up 24% points versus the recovery enjoyed in the first quarter of 2021. □



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Net domestic assets decreased

Summary of the Monthly Bulletin of May 2022

In May 2022, money supply contracted by Afl. 43.5 million to Afl. 5,378.9 million, compared to April 2022, resulting from a decrease in net domestic assets (-Afl. 80.0 million) and an increase in net foreign assets (+Afl. 36.4 million).

The contraction in the domestic component of the money supply was caused by a decrease in domestic credit (-Afl. 103.8 million), and an increase in non-credit-related balance sheet items (+Afl. 23.9 million). The reduction in domestic credit was caused by a turn from net claims to net liabilities of the banking sector to the public sector (-Afl. 96.9 million), and lower claims of the banking sector on the private



sector (-Afl. 6.9 million). The decline in net claims of the banking sector on the public sector was the result of a growth in government deposits (+Afl. 97.0 million). The decrease in claims of the banking sector on the private sector was caused by lower loans to enterprises (-Afl. 5.4 million) and consumer credit (-Afl. 4.3 million), and an increase in housing mortgages (+Afl. 2.9 million).

In May 2022, the expansion in net foreign assets of the banking sector was due to net purchases of foreign exchange of Afl. 293.2 million from the public, mostly related to foreign exchange revenue from tourism exports. These were largely offset by net sales of foreign exchange of Afl. 256.8 million to the public, mainly associated with payments for goods imports.

Inflation

The consumer price index (CPI) for May 2022 noted a 5.2 percent rise year-over-year (YOY) compared to a 4.7 percent increase (YOY) for April 2022. The main contributor to this increase was the "Transport" component. The 12-month average inflation rate was 3.0 percent in May 2022, compared to 2.6 percent in April 2022.

Government

Total government revenue amounted to Afl. 159.0 million in May 2022, Afl. 50.9 million more than the same month of the previous year. The rise in government revenue resulted from an increase in tax revenue (+Afl. 58.6 million) and a de-

crease in nontax revenue (-Afl. 7.7 million).

The growth in tax revenue was driven by expansion in income from profit tax (+Afl. 47.9 million), turnover tax (B.B.O./B.A.V.P.) (+Afl. 5.1 million), and wage tax (+Afl. 2.7 million).

Tourism

The number of stay-over visitors amounted to 91,403 in May 2022, which is 20,720 visitors (+29.3 percent) more than in May 2021. The North American market, the Latin American market, and the European market increased by 11,276 visitors (+17.9 percent), 5,302 visitors (+299.2 percent), and 4,523 visitors (+148.1 percent), respectively. □

Can I have a ..., please?

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change?? How about a different breakfast from what you are used to at your hotel. Hop in your car, drive around and anywhere around the island you will come across a local snack shop.

Here you will find all types of snacks loved by the locals. Try a pastechi, a Caribbean pastry filled with cheese or meat and fried up

deliciously. Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, a crusty little meat ball. A dedito is also a good option, it's a stick made out of cheese or hotdog. If you want to try something more familiar go for a homemade hamburger or a ham and cheese toast, but with a local touch. All these snacks are ridiculously addictive. Freshen up with a delicious fruit shake (batido) made out of watermelon, strawberry, banana, papaya or



just mix any fruit together. What makes these little snack shops more attractive is the warmth of

its people and with the smile you are being served. □

Crystal Leito:

“Believe in yourself because you can, and if you want to do it, just do it and don’t worry what other people think or say.”

Crystal Leito, like many other young people in the era of technology, is very active on social media. This resulted for extraordinary opportunities for Crystal, kickstarting her career as a social media influencer. Crystal told our reporter how she came to her career, her hobbies and her vision for the future.

Crystal studied at the International School of Aruba, and later continued her studies at Flagler College, Florida, where she studied Business Administration and Marketing, earning her Bachelors last year. After graduation she worked in administration for two years, and currently she is working as a freelance social media coordinator for different businesses.

She says that her career as a social media influencer started around two years ago, during the Covid-19 pandemic. Because everything was closed during the pandemic, social media exploded, and as someone who was always very active on social media, various local companies, big and small businesses approached her to help them with their social me-



dia presence. And so her career as a social media influencer started.

“I did different promotions. I even did one from the Netherlands, a business which a young woman had just started and contacted me to give exposure to their name. So yeah, I do different things and it varies. It can be sports, beauty, drinks, it’s really varied”,

she commented.

But like any career, social media influencers confront many challenges. One of these is the accounts of companies on social media which many times turn out to be fake. Crystal explains that she also went through such an experience, but to avoid falling for these sorts of lies, she tries to research the account of supposed companies that reach out. “I try to check properly because you can receive a message that can be spam, often is spam. So I try to check out their page, check their interactions, because maybe they have a lot of followers but their interactions don’t match the amount of followers on their page. That’s how often you can tell if the account is real or not”, she says.

Crystal is also very active with sports training, and recently she is more involved with kickboxing. She says that she always liked physical activity, and she was always active with running, going to the gym – it was always a part of her

routine. She considers herself a morning person, and she likes to start her day by training in the morning.

It's been about a year and a half since she started training in kickboxing, and this became part of her daily routine. “I really like it, I find it's a great cardio exercise but also a stress relief workout, it really is all-in-one”, she says.

For many, kickboxing is specifically for men. For women to participate in this was, and for some people still is, seen as a taboo. Crystal always had a big interest in kickboxing. She says that her father is a boxing commentator and her brother was in kickboxing in karate since he was eight years old. But Crystal could never join because she is a girl, and kickboxing is an aggressive contact sport.

But now as a grown-up, Crystal decided to try it, and personally she finds kickboxing a sport which empowers women. “It's not necessarily that you're aggressive, it's really empowering to think ‘wow I did that, I pushed my limit’. It's really great”, she added.

She commented that it's still a taboo for women to

participate in kickboxing because still a lot of people associate kickboxing with aggression or just for men. But for Crystal, it's really not like that. She emphasizes that it's something for everyone, it's a sport that empowers many and provides a lot of discipline.

Regarding her vision for the future, she says that her main goal is to eventually launch her own social media and marketing business. “I think that being really an image myself on social media already, I want to grow into this and eventually be completely on my own, with my own social media and marketing business.”

To finalize, Crystal has a message for women who always wanted to try any hobby or follow a dream, but because of taboo or any other limit, never dared to try. “I was myself one of them for some time, and I would say to that, just believe in yourself, that's very important. Believe in yourself, because you can, and if you want to do it just do it. Don't worry with what other people think or say regarding your hobbies and dreams. If you believe in yourself and it's what you want, go for it.” □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Trite Clifford

6 Newborns 46 Rental

11 Superior choice

12 On the ball

13 Board, as a bus

14 Math com- parison

15 Take cover

17 Choreog- raphy bit

18 Glided

20 Ship's trail

22 Sister, of sorts

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31 In shape

32 Gumbo veggie

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38 Bakery come-on

40 Mariner's place

43 Speech problems

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Michelle Obama's book 'The Light We Carry' coming this fall

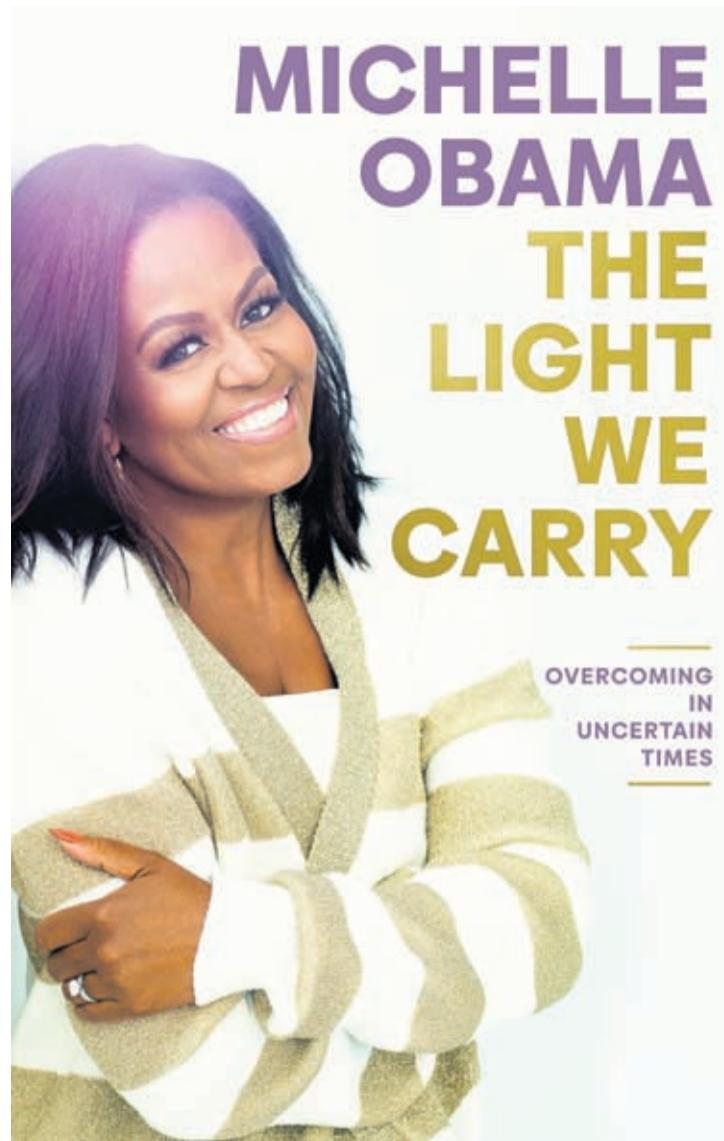
By HILLEL ITALIE

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Michelle Obama will have a book out this fall, "The Light We Carry," in which she reflects upon her experiences and shares insights on navigating an increasingly stressful world.

It's the former first lady's first entirely new work since the 2018 release of her acclaimed blockbuster "Becoming," which has sold more than 17 million copies worldwide, surpassing the sales of any memoir by a previous first lady or modern president, including her husband, former President Barack Obama.

"I've learned it's okay to recognize that self-worth comes wrapped in vulnerability, and that what we share as humans on this earth is the impulse to strive for better, always and no matter what," Michelle Obama writes in the book's introduction, included in Thursday's announcement by the Random House Publishing Group and its imprint Crown. "We become bolder in brightness. If you know your light, you know yourself. You know your own story in an honest way. In my experience, this type of self-knowledge builds confidence, which in turn



This image released by Random House shows "The Light We Carry" by former first lady and author Michelle Obama.

Associated Press

breeds calmness and an ability to maintain perspective, which leads, finally, to being able to connect meaningfully with others —

and this to me is the bedrock of all things."

The new book is not part of the reported eight-figure deal the Obamas reached

in 2017, shortly after he left office, with parent company Penguin Random House for their respective memoirs. A spokesperson declined to discuss financial terms for "The Light We Carry."

Crown will publish the 336-page book Nov. 15, almost exactly four years after the release of "Becoming," and has announced a first printing of 2.75 million copies for the U.S. and Canada. "The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times" will come out simultaneously in 14 languages and 27 countries, with additional rights deals expected.

"In 'The Light We Carry,' Mrs. Obama offers readers a series of fresh stories and insightful reflections on change, challenge, and power, including her belief that when we light up for others, we can illuminate the richness and potential of the world around us, discovering deeper truths and new pathways for progress," the publisher's announcement reads in part. "Drawing from her experiences as a mother, daughter, spouse, friend, and First Lady, she shares the habits and principles she has developed to successfully adapt to change and overcome various obsta-

cles — the earned wisdom that helps her continue to 'become.'" On Thursday, Penguin Random House announced it was renaming an annual writing prize in her honor, the \$10,000 Michelle Obama Award for Memoir, part of an awards program for public high school students the company launched in 1993.

Since completing "Becoming," Michelle Obama has written an edition for younger readers and launched a podcast. With Barack Obama and their production company Higher Ground she has worked on such projects as the Oscar-winning documentary "American Factory" and a documentary about her tour for "Becoming," when she appeared at arenas nationwide with such guest interviewers as Oprah Winfrey and Sarah Jessica Parker. Promotional plans for "The Light We Carry" will be announced later.

Crown is also the long-time publisher of Barack Obama, himself a million-selling author. "A Promised Land," the first of two planned memoirs about his presidency, came out in 2020. A spokesperson declined to comment on when the next book will be released. □

Pete Seeger gets own stamp; ceremony planned at Newport Folk

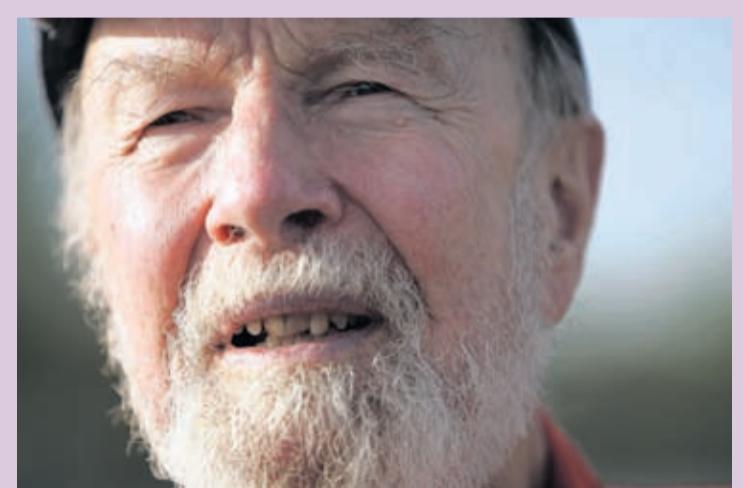
NEWPORT, R.I. (AP) — Pete Seeger, the banjo-playing folk singer whose music was indelibly intertwined with his social activism, was honored Thursday as the latest American musician to appear on a U.S. postage stamp.

The forever stamp, which features a color-tinted, black-and-white photograph taken in the early 1960s showing Seeger in profile singing and playing his five-string banjo, went on sale at post offices nationwide, according to a U.S. Postal Service spokesperson. A special ceremony was planned for the evening in New-

port, Rhode Island, the site of the Newport Folk Festival, where Seeger was a performer and for a time a member of the board. This year's three-day festival starts Friday.

"It is an honor to see a photo of my father I'd taken some 60 years ago become this wonderful forever stamp," his son, Dan Seeger, said in a statement. "My dad did most of his correspondence by hand — written letters — and I can imagine him smiling and of course appreciating this great honor because he relied on the U.S. Mail with its simplicity and honesty, knowing that

thoughts and ideas can go from the sender over a tremendous expanse to a single receiver and get delivered." Seeger, a Harvard dropout who died in 2014 at age 94, wrote or co-wrote "If I Had a Hammer," "Turn, Turn, Turn," and "Where Have All the Flowers Gone." He is also credited with popularizing "We Shall Overcome," an anthem of the civil rights movement. "He was not only a champion of traditional American music, he was also celebrated as a unifying power by promoting a variety of causes, such as civil rights, workers' rights, social justice, the



In this May 5, 2006, file photo, Pete Seeger talks during an interview in Beacon, N.Y. In this May 5, 2006, file photo, Pete Seeger talks during an interview in Beacon, N.Y.

Associated Press

peace movement and protecting the environment," said Tom Foti, the postal service's product solutions vice president. While Seeger, a lifelong activist, was exiled from commercial air play in the

1950s and 1960s after an appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee for his Communist affiliations, his career never slowed and he continued to record and tour. □

Jonas Vingegaard drops Pogacar in final Tour mountain test



Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, and Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar, wearing the best young rider's white jersey, climb Col d'Aubisque pass during the eighteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 143.5 kilometers (89.2 miles) with start in Lourdes and finish in Hautacam, France, Thursday, July 21, 2022.

HAUTACAM, France (AP)

— Barring a crash, Jonas Vingegaard is likely to be wearing the yellow jersey when the Tour de France ends in Paris on Sunday. Vingegaard responded to a series of attacks from defending champion Tadej Pogacar on Thursday and ultimately dropped his main rival in the last big mountain stage of this year's race to increase his overall lead to three minutes, 26 seconds. With only one big test left — a 41-kilometer (25.5-mile) time trial scheduled for Saturday — the Jumbo-Visma leader from Denmark seems all but guaranteed to win his maiden Tour title after reaching the Hautacam resort on his own.

"It's incredible. I told my girlfriend and daughter this morning that I wanted to win the stage for them. I'm happy and proud that I won for them," Vingegaard said. "I need to stay focused and keep taking it day by day. I don't want to talk about winning the Tour yet. Let's talk about it in two days."

Pogacar, the two-time defending champion, took all the risks and crashed on a downhill as he relentlessly tried to isolate Vingegaard. Back on his bike, Pogacar cracked about four kilometers from the finish in the final ascent, with his hopes of winning a third consecutive title all but dashed.

"I went all in for the yellow," Pogacar said. "I did not

give up, I pushed my limits and I'm proud of today. Today the best man won."

Vingegaard then went solo to claim a second stage win following his success at the Col du Granon last week in the Alps on the day he took control of the race. Pogacar crossed the finish line more than one minute behind Vingegaard.

The final big mountain stage of this year's race got off a lively start with a myriad of attacks outside the city of Lourdes.

Vingegaard's Jumbo-Visma team managed to put the powerful and versatile Belgian Wout Van Aert in the day's breakaway. By sending the strong all-rounder up front, the mighty Dutch team made sure he would be available later in the stage to pace Vingegaard.

And it was indeed Van Aert who made Pogacar crack with his frenetic tempo in the last climb. Van Aert completed the stage podium.

Earlier, Pogacar had asked Brandon McNulty to set a fast pace on the narrow and winding roads leading up to the Col de Spandelles, the only unprecedented climb of the 2022 Tour. Pogacar launched his first attack in that climb. But Vingegaard looked unfazed and immediately took the wheel of his rival. The duo was later joined by Vingegaard's domestique Sepp Kuss, who positioned

himself at the front to guide his leader.

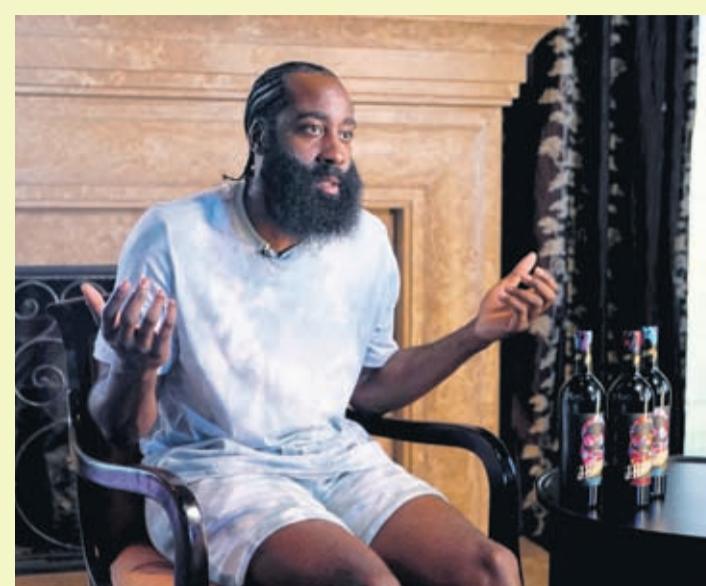
Standing up on his pedals, Pogacar tried in vain to drop Vingegaard with another sharp attack closer to the summit before Geraint Thomas accelerated. Pogacar waited patiently in Vingegaard's wake then went off again with Vingegaard responding as they overtook and dropped Thomas in the grueling ascent.

Pogacar went full speed in the technical downhill and Vingegaard was forced to ride hard to follow the pace. The Danish rider had a scare when his back wheel swerved but it was Pogacar who made a mistake. He misjudged a curve and went down in the gravel on the side of the road.

"It took me a little bit by surprise, and there was gravel on the side and I hit the ground, but I'm OK," Pogacar said.

The crash took place at a moderate speed and the UAE-Emirates rider was quickly back on his bike with road rash on his left thigh. Vingegaard then waited for Pogacar and both men shook hands before their final showdown on the road to Hautacam. Thomas, the 2018 Tour champion, finished the stage in fourth place, 2:54 off the pace. The Ineos-Grenadiers leader was third overall, eight minutes behind Vingegaard. □

Associated Press



NBA 10-time All-Star James Harden discusses his upcoming J. Harden x J Shed wine collaboration that debuts in September at his home in Beverly Hills, Calif., on Sunday, July 17, 2022.

Associated Press

AP source: Harden, 76ers agree on 2-year, \$68 million deal

By TIM REYNOLDS

AP Basketball Writer

James Harden has agreed to terms on a two-year contract to stay with the Philadelphia 76ers and will make about \$14.5 million less this coming season than he could have earned under his previous deal, a person with knowledge of the negotiations said Wednesday.

Harden will sign a deal worth slightly over \$68 million, paying him about \$33 million this season and with a \$35 million player option for the 2023-24 season, according to the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the team has not announced the deal.

ESPN first reported the agreement being finalized between the 76ers and the 10-time All-Star guard. Harden had a \$47.4 million option for this coming season that he declined last month, saying he wanted to give the 76ers flexibility to improve their roster and compete for a championship. Giving back that much money — Harden basically gave himself a 30% pay cut for this coming season — allowed the 76ers to make moves such as signing power forward P.J. Tucker and small forward Danuel House earlier this month.

"We got some really good pieces this summer, so now it's time for us to go do the hard work," Harden said in an interview with AP earlier this week to promote the upcoming launch of a new wine label bearing his name.

Harden's plans have been clear since Philadelphia's season ended: He was committed to staying with the 76ers and committed to help them get better.

"I'll be here," Harden said on May 12, when Philadelphia's season ended with a playoff loss to Miami. "Yeah, I'll be here. Whatever makes this team, whatever allows this team to continue to grow and get better and do the things necessary to win and compete at the highest level."

Harden is a three-time scoring champion and averaged 22.0 points and 10.3 assists during his time with Brooklyn and Philadelphia last season. The seven-time All-NBA player was the 2018 NBA MVP and is a member of the league's 75th anniversary team. □

Matijevic's 9th-inning single lifts Astros over Yankees 3-2

By KRISTIE RIEKEN

AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Rookie J.J. Matijevic's pinch-hit RBI single with two outs in the ninth inning lifted the Houston Astros to a 3-2 win over the New York Yankees on Thursday in the opener of a day-night doubleheader between the American League's top teams.

Alex Bregman led off the Houston ninth with a single against Michael King (6-3). Bregman advanced to third on Aledmys Díaz's double. After Yuli Gurriel struck out, pinch-hitter Yordan Alvarez was walked intentionally to load the bases.

King looked as if he might be able to escape the jam after he struck out Chas McCormick, but Matijevic drove in Bregman with an infield single to shortstop.

"The bullpen did a great job and boy, that was an exciting win for us and the fans and for J.J.," Astros manager Dusty Baker said. "I was happy for J.J."

Baker was impressed by the work of Matijevic and fellow rookie Korey Lee, who drove in a run in the second.

"These rookies aren't afraid," Baker said. "They can grow up right before your eyes in that situation."



Houston Astros pinch hitter J.J. Matijevic, center top, celebrates with Jeremy Peña (3) and Korey Lee (38) after hitting a walkoff single during the ninth inning in the first game of a baseball doubleheader against the New York Yankees, Thursday, July 21, 2022, in Houston.

Associated Press

... They're understanding what this rivalry is all about and the magnitude of the ballgames."

The doubleheader between the major league-leading Yankees and the Astros is to help make up a series that was postponed because of the lockout. Houston won the first game of the series on June 30.

"It's definitely news to watch us play each other," New York's Giancarlo Stanton said. "But at the end of

the day, we've got to stay ahead of them for home-field (advantage) and every game is important. But there's obviously a bit more spice on these games."

Baker echoed the sentiments of Stanton as it relates to his team.

"It's just July, but it's mid-July and these things count," Baker said. "We're trying to chase a team."

The Astros carried a 2-1 lead into the ninth. But Aaron Hicks singled against Héctor

Neris (3-3) and scored on Isiah Kiner-Falefa's two-out single, a grounder that rolled just past shortstop Jeremy Peña for the tying hit.

DJ LeMahieu homered in the fifth, but the Yankees were just 1 for 8 with runners in scoring position.

Houston jumped in front by scoring in each of the first two innings against Jordan Montgomery.

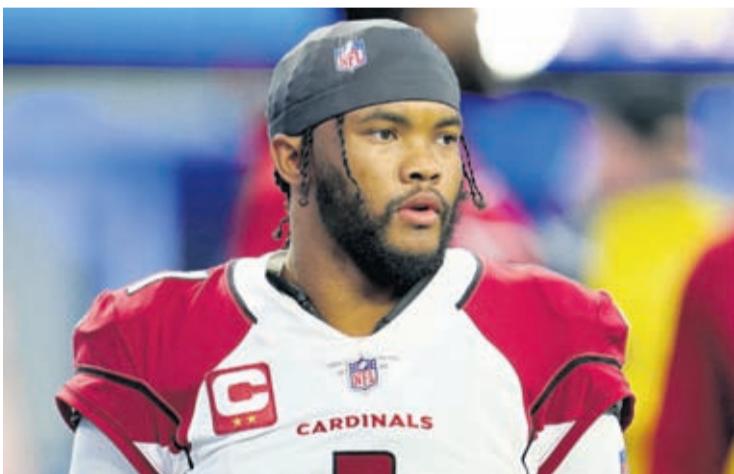
Jose Altuve and Peña opened Houston's first with

back-to-back bunt singles. Bregman drove in Altuve with a one-out single to center. Mauricio Dubón walked and scored on Lee's double in the second. The Yankees loaded the bases with no outs in the third, but Cristian Javier escaped the jam with some help from his defense. Matt Carpenter lined to Gurriel at first, and he completed a double play by beating Aaron Judge back to first. Gleyber Torres then flied out, ending the inning.

"They hit the ball hard like and couldn't get through there," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "And then their bullpen was pretty tough against us today, too."

Montgomery tied a season high with eight strikeouts in 6 2/3 innings. He allowed seven hits and walked one. Javier tied a season high by issuing four walks while allowing one run and two hits in five innings. It was Javier's first start against the Yankees since he pitched seven innings in a combined no-hitter at New York on June 25. Neris and Ryan Pressly finished the historic gem.

It was just the third doubleheader for the domed Minute Maid Park, which opened in 2000. □



Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray warms up before an NFL wild-card playoff football game against the Los Angeles Rams in Inglewood, Calif., Monday, Jan. 17, 2022.

Associated Press

By DAVID BRANDT

AP Sports Writer

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — The drama is over and the decision is in: Kyler Murray and the Arizona Cardinals have made a long-term commitment to each other with a new contract that would

keep the quarterback in the desert through the 2028 season.

The two-time Pro Bowl selection was taken with the No. 1 overall pick out of Oklahoma after he won the Heisman Trophy and has largely delivered in his

Murray, Cardinals agree to contract through 2028 season

quest to make the Cardinals a better franchise. The team announced the new contract on Thursday. ESPN reported that the contract could be worth \$230.5 million, with \$160 million guaranteed.

Murray's new contract puts him on par with other young star quarterbacks throughout the league like Buffalo's Josh Allen, who signed a deal worth more than \$250 million last season. Murray will make an average of more than \$46 million per season, which is similar to other elite quarterbacks such as Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers, Kansas City's Patrick Mahomes and Allen.

Listed at just 5-foot-10, some around the NFL worried the 24-year-old Murray was too short to be a dominant pro quarterback, but his stats through three seasons prove otherwise.

He's completed nearly 67% of his passes through 46 career games for 11,480 yards and 70 touchdowns while rushing for 1,786 yards and 20 TDs. Murray is particularly good at extending plays with his feet, using his scrambling ability for spectacular gains.

Arizona had a 5-10-1 record during his rookie season in 2019 but the Cardinals improved to 11-6 last season before losing to the Los Angeles Rams in the

NFC Wild Card round during the playoffs. The deal brings an end to a strange, passive-aggressive off-season contract squabble. At one point, Murray wiped his social media accounts of all references to the Cardinals and it wasn't clear whether the franchise was ready to make a long-term investment. The two sides appeared to be on a path toward reconciliation over the past few months. GM Steve Keim said that there was "zero chance" Murray would be traded and the quarterback put on social media that he wanted to win Super Bowls with the Cardinals and called Arizona "home." □